

“Chosen, holy, dearly loved: Colossians 3:12”

Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost – October 17, 2021

Tom Mount – Holy Trinity Chico

Scripture reading – Col 3:12-14

¹² “Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. ¹³ Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. ¹⁴ And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.”

Introduction

Next to an accurate understanding of God, an accurate Understanding of yourself is your most important asset.

- Who are you? What we believe about ourselves influences – at a subconscious level – everything we do. God wants you to be rock solid in your identity. And only one answer is adequate.

Your New Nature

1. **“You are not now who you once were.”** If you have a genuine relationship with Jesus Christ, you are not the same person you were before you put your trust in Christ. 2 Cor 5:17: **“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!”**
2. Who are you now at the deepest, truest level? You are a child of God, an artistic masterpiece made by the master craftsman, created in Christ to do good things: Eph 2:10. That is the only adequate answer to the question: who are you?
3. And all throughout the New Testament, God teases out the implications of what it means to be new creations remade in the image of God.

4. I want to take the balance of our time to consider one verse: Col. 3:12:
“Therefore, as God’s **chosen** people, **holy** and **dearly loved**, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.” Col. 3:12

Your New Identity

1. Chosen

- “God’s chosen people” is *eklektoi tou Theou* (*ek*-out, *lego*-call: “called out or chosen of God”; *ekklesia*-church: called out ones).
- What have we been chosen to do? (Eph 1:4-6; John 15:16; Luke 4:18-19).
- What an honor! He has personally hand-picked you to play a critical role in the most momentous undertaking in the history of the universe; the extension of God’s kingdom by rescuing, one at a time, men, women and children who are not being held in captivity by a relentless enemy.

2. Holy

- You may not feel holy. But this verse isn’t talking about what you feel like. It’s describing who you are. And you are holy.
- The word in the original language is *hagios* – “ritually cleansed and set apart for God’s exclusive use.”
- In what sense are you and I holy? In two ways:
 1. First, we are holy by virtue of Christ’s righteousness given to us through “imputation.” Cf. Col. 1:22: “...holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation.” This is a finished work.
 2. Second, we are holy by virtue of God’s righteousness implanted in us through “impartation.” Cf. Col 3:3-4; 1 John 3:9: “No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God’s sperm remains in him.”
- Why do we still sin? Eph 2:1-3: the world, the devil and the flesh.
- The best way to resist temptation is to understand that you are holy, made to live a qualitatively superior life, one of righteousness, holiness, purity and courage. So, when the opportunity presents itself to

compromise, I can say no to it because it isn't consistent with my identity, my purpose, my calling.

- Draw a line in the sand this morning. You are holy. Live that way.

3. Dearly Loved

- What words would you use to describe how God feels about you right now?
- I've had the chance to ask this question of many people over the years. And most of them have this gnawing sense that God is displeased with them.
- How do you suppose someone will live with this conception of God?
- God says you are "dearly loved," *agapao*, "beloved". This is the deepest truth about you. God the Father feels the same way about you as He feels about Jesus! Cf. Jn 15:9: "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you."
- You might say, "but I'm not worthy!" Some things are loved because they are worthy, other things are worthy because they are loved.
- I'm going to make a categorical statement: ***the single most important datum in your universe is the unequivocal fact that God loves you personally, passionately and profoundly.***
- And why is it so critical that you grasp that? Because until you do, your life will be a relentless quest for the security, power, peace, joy that come only through a firsthand knowledge that you are deeply loved by God.
- 1 John 4:18-19: "We need have no fear of someone who loves us perfectly; his perfect love for us eliminates all dread of what he might do to us. If we are afraid, it is for fear of what he might do to us and that shows us that we are not fully convinced that he really loves us."
- Most of us find this the hardest thing to believe. Because from our earliest days, we have tried to earn the imperfect love of our parents.
- A tapestry of scriptural truths:

Before you were born, you were special to Me. I knew you before you were conceived in your mother's womb. With My own hands I fearfully and wonderfully created every detail that makes you unique. I knit together your body, soul and spirit.

I saw you long before you ever existed. I watched every day of your life. So I know you. I know where you have been, where you are, and where you are going.

If only you knew the thoughts I have toward you. Did you know My thoughts for you outnumber the grains of sand on all the beaches of the world? You are the apple of My eye. When trouble approaches, I hide you in the shadow of My wings. I have even engraved you on the palms of My hands.

It is My love for you that makes you precious and honored in My sight. I created you for My glory, and I will never abandon what I have formed and made. My goodness and love will follow you every day of your life. So do not fret; I will fulfill My purpose for your life. And always remember . . . My love endures forever and ever!

Take away

- That's the truth about you right now. But you must hang on to it with all your power. Life is a battle: your enemy wants to rip these truths out of your hands.
- Tell yourself constantly throughout this week: **"I am chosen, holy, dearly loved."**

A few good books on these themes

- *What Jesus Wished People Knew about God* by Jurgen Schulz.
- *The Ragamuffin Gospel* by Brennan Manning
- *The Return of the Prodigal* by Henri Nouwen
- *Victory Over the Darkness* by Neil Anderson